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SIXTY IRISH SONGS

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# SIXTY IRISH SONGS

# EDITED BY WILLIAM ARMS FISHER

FOR HIGH VOICE



BOSTON: OLIVER DITSON COMPANY NEW YORK: CHAS. H. DITSON & CO. CHICAGO: LYON & HEALY

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#### IRISH MUSIC

A voice beside the dim enchanted river,
Out of the twilight where the brooking trees
Hear the Shannon's druid water chant forever
Tales of dead kings and bards and shanachies;
A girl's young voice out of the twilight singing
Old songs beside the legendary stream.
A girl's clear voice o'er the wan waters ringing,
Beats with its wild wings at the Gates of Dream.

Sweet in its plaintive Irish modulations,
Her fresh young voice tuned to old sorrows seems,
The passionate cry of countless generations
Keenes in her breast as there she sings and dreams.
No more, sad voice; for now the dawn is breaking
Through the long night, through Ireland's night of tears.
New songs wake in the morning of her awaking
From the enchantment of eight hundred years.

JOHN TODHUNTER

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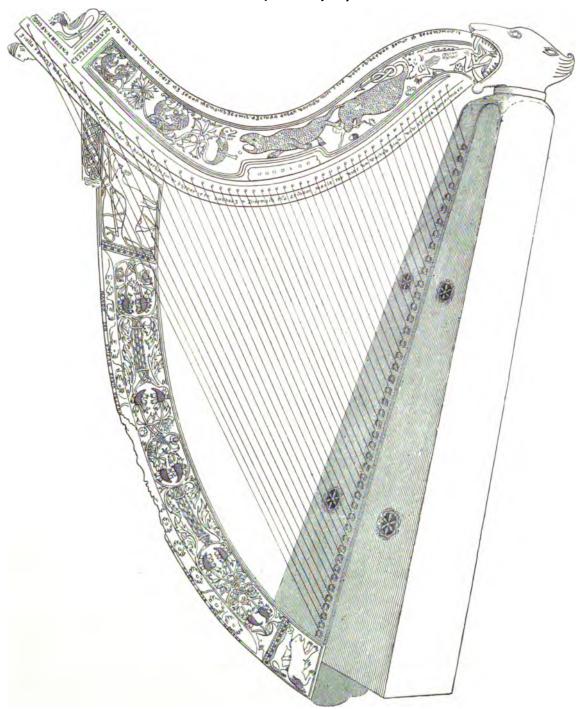
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#### ANCIENT IRISH HARP

IN 1809 THIS INSTRUMENT WAS IN THE POSSESSION OF NOAH DALNIAY, ESQ., OF BELLAHILL, NEAR CARRICKFERGUS. AN ENGRAVING WAS MADE OF IT FOR THE FRONTISPIECE OF EDWARD BUNTING'S ANCIENT IRISH MUSIC, PUBLISHED IN LONDON, NOVEMBER, 1809



#### TRANSLATION OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

#### EGO SUM REGINA CITHARUM = I AM THE QUEEN OF HARPS

FROM THE GAELIC, BEGINNING WITH THE UPPER LINE: I, JOHN MCEMGIN, HAD AS MY PATRON, GERALD OF CLUAN, AT THE TIME THAT I PROFESSED POETRY AND MUSIC; AMONG MY OTHER PATRONS WERE JAMES MACSHANE AND MAURICE GILPATRICK, WHO WERE FAMOUS AS MEN OF MUSIC, KNOWN TO ME AS BEING UNEXCELLED; I MAY ALSO MENTION DIARMAID MACCRIDAM AND WITH HIM TWO SAGES OF AN ANCIENT SCHOOL WHO WERE WITH ME AS COLLABORATORS

### SIXTY IRISH SONGS



F the sixty songs included in this volume one-third are familiar to lovers of Irish music, while two-thirds are presented for the first time; that is, nearly forty folk-melodies of Ireland are here united to lyrics by Irish poets and welded with accompaniments that seek to express their spirit.

These melodies were culled by an examination of more than two thousand recorded folk-tunes, most of them wordless.

Songs hitherto published based on Irish folktunes have been of two types: the poet seeking melodies to match his lyrics, or the musician seeking lyrics to fit chosen melodies. Thomas Moore was of the first type, though he did not hesitate to change the melodies to fit his own lyrics. His successors have been of the second type, notably Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, who, respecting and cherishing the melodies of his country, has been fortunate in having the cooperation of an Irish lyricist of kindred spirit, Mr. Alfred Perceval Graves, who with uncommon skill and sympathy wrote or adapted lyrics to match the recorded melodies without change.

A third and hitherto untried plan has been followed in the preparation of this volume. Instead of employing lyrics written to order, the editor has turned directly to the wealth of modern Irish lyric poetry, and after examining volumes containing in the aggregate over two thousand poems, he culled nearly two hundred that had the song quality, that were of the music-provoking type. Therefore the lyrics, instead of being by one hand, are the spontaneous work of many Irish poets.

After selecting melodies of charm and lyrics that were songful came the delicate task of finding the right melody for a chosen lyric, or the appropriate lyric for a chosen air, without changing either melody or lyric—the sine qua non being their mutual fitness, not merely in metre and in rhythm but in spirit, in kinship. The two should so accord as to seem to have been written for each other,

or even written together. With what measure of success this new plan has been carried out the completed songs must evidence.

The fourth stage in the work was the congenial task of welding chosen melody and lyric into a complete union by means of an expressive accompaniment. As folksongs in their natural state are without accompaniment or any harmonic support whatever, the question arises as to the style of accompaniment most appropriate for them, or, indeed, whether they should be accompanied at all. To the extreme position of some folklorists it is enough to say, that unless these folk-tunes are to remain sealed in the silence of antiquarian tomes and the journals of Folksong societies, they must be given not only words but accompaniments. Shall these accompaniments be reduced to a mere skeleton barely sufficient to support the voice, or shall they be enriched with something of the color our sophisticated modern ears demand?

Broadly speaking, there are two ways of writing accompaniments to old melodies: the way of the arranger, and the way of the composer. The first manufactures a conventional piano part that is as unobtrusive as possible and therefore colorless and dull; the second, with careful regard for the character of both melody and text, creates a colorful accompaniment that enhances both, gives them fresh significance, and when most perfectly done charms the listener with the impression of a fresh and spontaneous creation. The humdrum commonplaceness of the first type suits well the pedestrian mind, and endless examples abound. The danger in the second type is lack of due restraint and forgetfulness of the beauty of simplicity. It may, of course, be argued that the natural sincerity and essential naiveté of folk-tunes tend to disappear, the more subtle the supplied accompaniment; that folk-music and art-music are too distinct and separate by nature to merge. These questions can be hotly debated. The wordless folk-tunes in the first volume of Edward Bunting's Ancient Irish Music (London, 1796) led to the writing of Thomas Moore's earlier Melodies. In the poet's own words: "They were the mine from which the workings of my labors as a poet have derived their lustre and value."

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, the eminent Irish musician, in the preface to his revision of Moore's Irish Melodies (London, 1894), while acknowledging the value of Moore's work as the first popular presentation of the folksongs of Ireland, says: "There is scarcely a melody which Moore left unaltered, and, as a necessary consequence, unspoilt."

Moore's Melodies were published in sections at intervals from 1807 to 1834. The poet's first colaborer was Sir John Stevenson, who wrote the piano accompaniments in the current style of his day. Dr. Stanford calls him "a remarkable musician," but "much under the influence of the works of Haydn, and he seems to have imported into his arrangements a dim echo of the style of the great Austrian composer. He could scarcely have chosen a model more unsuited for the wildness and ruggedness of the music with which he had to deal." But Sir John, eminent in his own day, wrote in the fashion of his time, just as the eminent Sir Charles has accompanied the very same melodies in the fashion of his later day, stamped of course with his individual traits.

Bunting made his arrangements in the artificial florid style of the period; Beethoven's settings of Irish airs bear his own hallmark; Stevenson's thin and dry harmonizations doubtless pleased Tom Moore's listeners, as the later arrangements of Bishop, Balfe, Hatton, and Molloy have in turn fitted the ever changing fashion of musi-

cal speech. Professor Stanford's late Victorian arrangements, again, are written in an idiom that his juniors doubtless regard as already passing, and, recently, Irish airs have appeared in London dressed in a garb that shows the influence, not of the remote Handel and Haydn, or the late Johannes Brahms, but of the contemporary Debussy.

In the nature of things no writer can escape his own period, can help inhaling the common air, or avoid writing in the current speech of his day. It is enough, then, to say that the accompaniments in this volume were written not yesterday but to-day, well knowing that to-morrow other hands will with equal enthusiasm set these and other Irish airs in a fashion that, whether simple or complex, will be of to-morrow.

As the writer has prepared these songs for singers to sing, rather than for students of folksong, he has sought to weld melody, text, and harmonic scheme into songs that would appeal, not because of their source, but because they held something of that beauty the artist forever seeks. These songs were gathered "That all who hear may dream a little while." From a rich abundance a few sprays have been torn—torn

"from the green boughs of old Eire, Green boughs of tossing always weary, weary! The willow of the many-sorrowed world."

Few but avowed Celticists know with what lavish richness Ireland has poured out her heart in both melody and poetry. As this volume is a union of both, it is not out of place to say a word regarding each and to quote from those who speak with authority.

As to the abundance of Irish folk-music, none

A Selection of Irish Melodies, with Symphonies and Accompaniments by Sir John Stevenson, Mus. Doc., and characteristic words by Thomas Moore, Esq., London, James Power, was issued in ten parts and a supplement between 1807 and 1834. The piano accompaniments of the first seven parts are by Stevenson. Part Seven is dated, October 1, 1818. Moore's co-laborer for the remaining parts was Sir Henry Bishop, Part Eight bearing the date, May, 1821. A pirated edition of this part appeared in Dublin in the same year, edited by the musician Bishop had supplanted—Sir John Stevenson.

In A Prefatory Letter to the Marchioness Dowager of D — that opens the original edition of the first volume of the Irish Melodies Moore feels called upon "to add a few words in defence of my ingenious coadjutor, Sir John Stevenson, who has been accused of having spoiled the simplicity of the airs by the chromatic richness of the symphonies, and the elaborate variety of his harmonies." This letter is dated, January, 1810.

can speak with greater knowledge than the late Dr. P. W. Joyce, long President of the "Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland," himself an indefatigable collector of folk-tunes and an authority on Irish life and history. In his important collection, Old Irish Folk Music and Songs (London and Dublin, 1909), he states that over three thousand different Irish airs are now in print, and that from known sources this number could readily be increased to five thousand.

As to the character and quality of this abundance, Sir Hubert Parry writes: "Irish folkmusic is probably the most human, most varied, most poetical in the world, and is particularly rich in tunes which imply considerable sympathetic sensitiveness."

Another English writer, Dr. Ernest Walker, is even more eloquent, for in his History of Music in England (Oxford, 1907) he says: "Few musicians have been found to question the assertion that. Irish folk-music is, on the whole, the finest that exists. It ranges with wonderful ease over the whole gamut of human emotion from the cradle to the battlefield, and is unsurpassed in poetical and artistic charm.... In their miniature form the best Irish folk-tunes are gems of absolutely flawless lustre. . . . For sheer beauty of melody, the works of Mozart, Schubert, and the Irish folk-composers form a triad that is unchallenged in the whole range of art. . . . In form, as well as melody, the best Irish folkmusic is exceptionally polished. The phrases have a quite exceptional freedom from anything like either vagueness or stiffness of line; the melodies never tie themselves into knots, and the rhythmical basis is always firm and coherent."

They who drink of Irish music draw from an olden fountain; its haunting airs bring back to mind forgotten things from long ago. It is to be regretted that the words of Ireland's recorded folksongs have, for the most part, been lost, yet the records of Irish literature are older far than any surviving music, for, in the words of the eminent Gaelic scholar, Professor Kuno Mayer, "The vernacular literature of ancient Ireland is the most primitive and original among the litera-

tures of Western Europe. Its importance as the earliest voice from the dawn of West European civilization cannot be denied. It is not till the end of the eleventh century that we find the beginnings of a national literature in France and Germany; whereas Ireland had become the heiress of the classical and theological learning of the Western Empire of the third and fourth centuries, and a period of humanism was thus ushered in which reached its culmination during the sixth and following centuries, the Golden Age of Irish civilization." It was then that "Ireland drew upon herself the eyes of the whole world as the one haven of rest, as the great seminary of learning, in a turbulent world overrun by hordes of barbarians."

In the same vein Renan, in his essay La Poésie de la Race Celtique, writes: "Ireland is the sole
country of Europe where the native can produce
authentic documents of his remote unbroken
lineage, and designate with certainty, up to prehistoric ages, the source from which he sprang.
Restricted by conquest to some islands and peninsulas of the West, the Celtic race has habitually striven to oppose an impassable barrier to
all alien influences. This ancient race has come
down to our day still faithful to its language,
its memories, its ideals, and its genius. In the
grand concert of the human species, no family
equals this for penetrating voices that go to the
heart."

A strange melancholy characterizes the genius of the Celtic race. In the words of William Sharp: "For all the blithe songs and happy abandon of so many Irish singers, the Irish themselves have given us the most poignant, the most hauntingly sad lyric cries in all modern literature. Renan fully recognizes this, and how, even in the heroic age, the melancholy of inappeasable regret, of insatiable longing, is as obvious as in our own day, when spiritual weariness is as an added crown of thorns." Whence comes this sadness, he asks? "Take the songs of the sixth century bards; they mourn more defeats than they sing victories. The history of the Celtic race itself is but a long complaint, the lament of exiles, the

grief of despairing flights beyond the seas. If occasionally it seems to make merry, a tear ever lurks behind the smile." As one of her own poets has said of Eire: "The sorrow of a thousand years makes dark her ever youthful eyes."

The use of English by the native poets of Ireland may be said to have begun toward the end of the eighteenth century. At first the flavor of this Anglo-Celtic poetry was local and national rather than universal. It voiced the passion for nationality, or the cry of the exile in remembrance of his land with its wild and romantic past. Sometimes it voiced the spirit of rebellion, or the pain of misery and famine, the misery of a whole country; or in wild revolt from sadness it sang with rollicking abandon, or pictured the tender idyls of peasant life that appear despite Ireland's turmoil and pain. Much of this poetry is unpretentious and reaches no high level, for, with a few exceptions, it is only lately, in what is called the Celtic Revival, that Irish poetry in English can claim to be a fine art. The poets of this later group for the most part remain distinctively Irish, as they should, but their best work has the universal quality, and by its distinction of form, its haunting beauty, and its wistful charm, it gives them an individual place in the Song of the World.

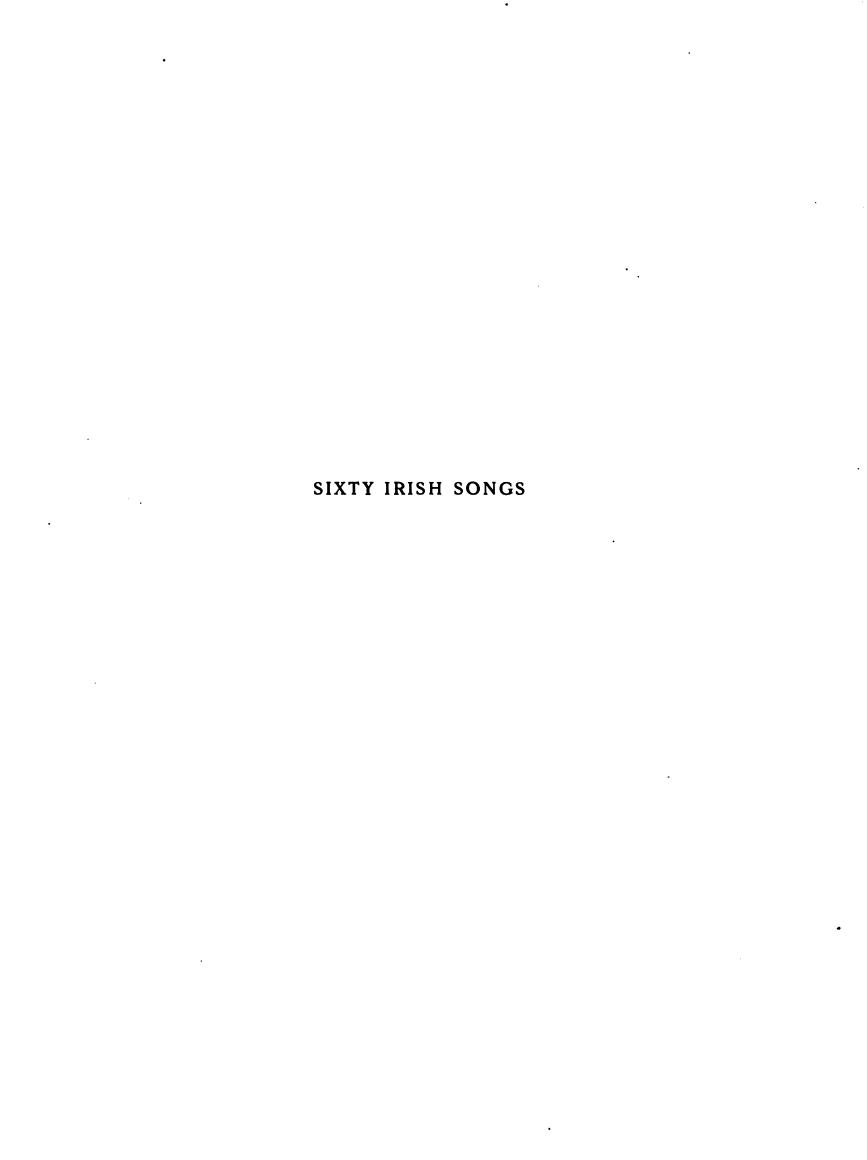
The poetry of this modern group has what Matthew Arnold calls the "Celtic nearness to Nature and her secret; Celtic aerialness and magic; the sheer, inimitable Celtic note." The contemporary Anglo-Celtic poetry of Ireland, writes William Sharp, "has a quality which no other English poetry possesses in like degree; the quality which Matthew Arnold defined as natural magic—'Celtic poetry drenched in the dew of natural magic.'"

That "inimitable Celtic note" lurks in the melodies and lyrics of this volume, for they both are Ireland's own. The editor on his part has sought only to enhance that note, and not to obtrude aught that is alien or discordant. In so far as he has succeeded will these songs pass on to others that magic of the Celt which Ireland's native songs have in a peculiar degree.

"Ne'er forgetful silence fall on thee,
Old music heard by Mona of the sea.
Nor may that eerie, wistful music die;
Still in the far, fair Gaelic places
Its sighing wakes the soul in withered faces,
And wakes remembrance of great things gone by."

Man Arms Fisher

Boston, June 15, 1915







ML-2512-3



# AT DAWNING OF THE DAY













# AVENGING AND BRIGHT

THOMAS MOORE

Air: "Cruachàn na Fèine" Arranged by William Arms Fisher











#### THE BLATHERSKITE



Words used by permission of the publisher, Mitchell Kennerly.





### BARNEY O'HEA









#### BELIEVE ME IF ALL THOSE ENDEARING YOUNG CHARMS

THOMAS MOORE

Air: "My lodging, it is on the cold-ground"

Arranged by William Arms Fisher





# BRIGHT DARLING OF MY HEART



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\*) Pronounced: Avurn-yeen gal mo chree. O, bright darling of my heart.







### BY THE LAKES OF KILLARNEY







#### THE CURSE OF MORA

ETHNA CARBERY

Irish Airs:
"The Blind Beggar of the Glen"
and "The Yellow Blanket"
Arranged by William Arms Fisher















ML-2521-5



- \*) As collected by Charlotte Milligan Fox.
  \*\*) Lough Lene is the old name of the Lower and Middle Lake of Killarney.



\*) Cooleen Dhas means: Pretty, fair-haired maiden.







ML-2522 - 5

## "DOWN BY THE SALLY GARDENS



\*) An extension of three lines sung by an old woman of Ballisodare.







Irish Air

#### ERE THE LONG ROLL OF THE AGES END

(FAINNE GEAL AN LAE)

"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away" ALICE MILLIGAN Arranged by William Arms Fisher With passionate exaltation VOICE **PIANO** dim of the ges end And the days long. rol1 of time are dim. done The Lord shall un - to rin send His\_ dim. ap - point - ed One, Whose soul must wait the\_ own dim.

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# FAREWELL TO SLIEV MORNA













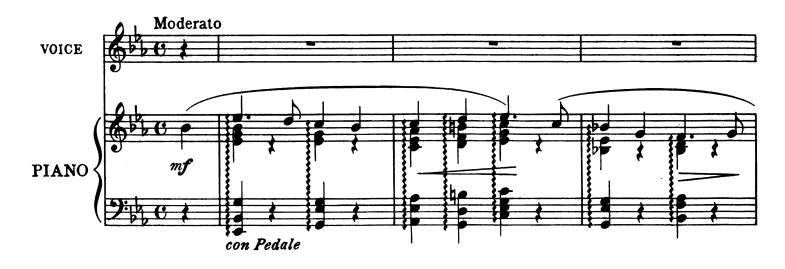


# THE HARP THAT ONCE THRO' TARA'S HALLS

THOMAS MOORE

Irish Air: "Gramachree"

Arranged by William Arms Fisher











### HAS SORROW THY YOUNG DAYS SHADED?









### THE HEATHER GLEN

GEORGE SIGERSON

Irish Air
"The brown little Mallet"

Arranged by William Arms Fisher



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# I HEARD IN THE NIGHT THE PIGEONS





# I LOVE MY LOVE IN THE MORNING











## I LOVE THE DIN OF BEATING DRUMS















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ML- 2535-3

### THE LEPREHAUN



Leprehaun: A weeny and roguish fairy full of merry tricks, hard to catch and harder to hold. If caught he will show you where treasure is hid or give you a purse of gold, but if you take your eyes off him he's gone in an instant.





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ML -2587 - 4



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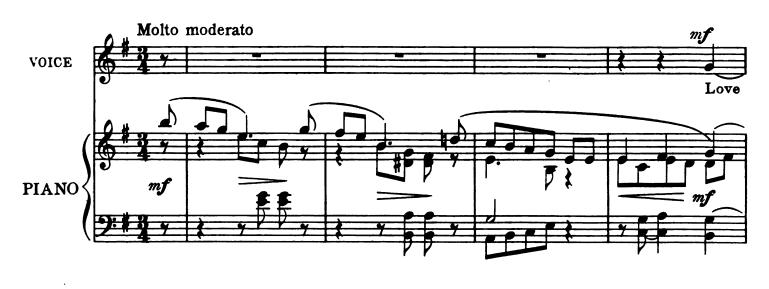
## THE LITTLE RED LARK

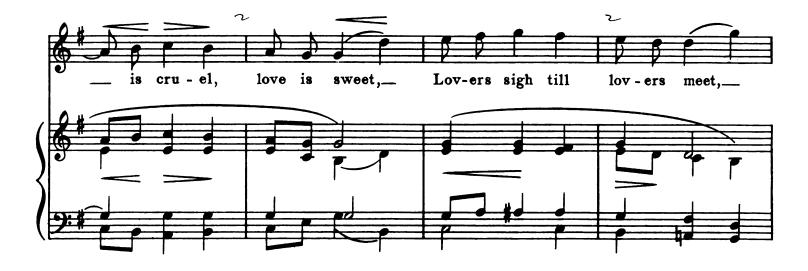




THOMAS MacDONAGH

Irish Air
Arranged by William Arms Fisher









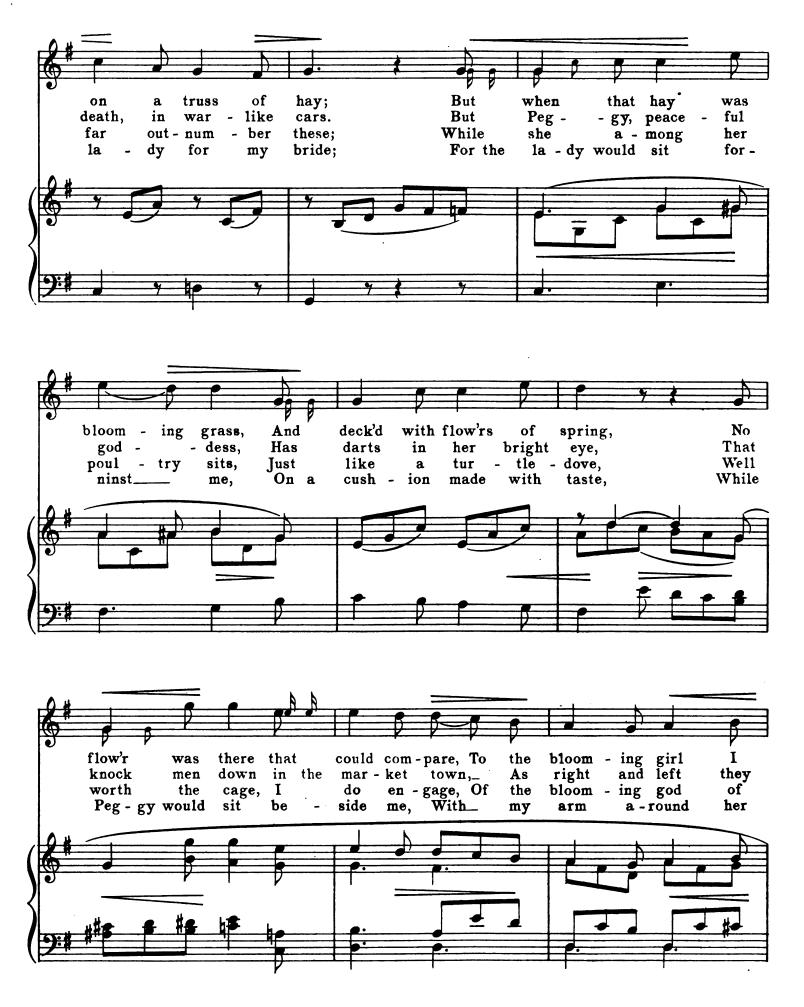


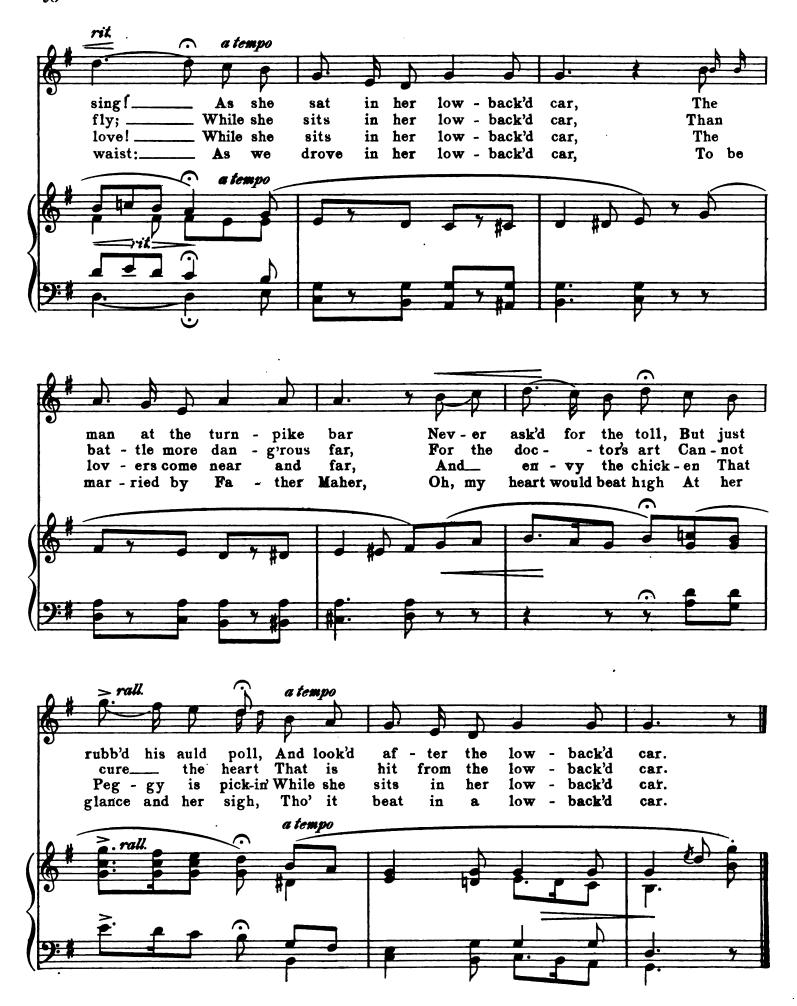


### THE LOW-BACKED CAR

Words and Music by SAMUEL LOVER Arranged by William Arms Fisher















ML-2542-4









a) Moirin, diminutive of Mor or Moria, a girl's name.



### MO BOUCHALEEN BWEE

#### (MY YELLOW-HAIRED LAD)

NORA HOPPER

Irish Air: "Coulin Dhas"

Arranged by William Arms Fisher



•) Bouchaleen: pronounced, vouchaleen.









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ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

Irish Air: "Coola Shore"



<sup>\*)</sup> The editor has made a few slight changes.





ML-2548-4











ML-2549-3



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\*) A merry little elf.



Irish Air FRANCIS A. FAHY Arranged by William Arms Fisher Con moto VOICE Not
 She **PIANO** from old\_ \_\_ Kin far - ra, in the mer - ry month. of va - - ra, joy - ous - ly, long\_\_ right tripp'd bas - ket on\_

sing - ing face; and

cheer

oh!

When

And

birds

oh!

were

her

May,

arm;\_

there

i - ly,

her grace,

ML-2552-6





M L-2552-6







## OH! IF I WERE YON GOSSAMER



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ML - 2558 - 5







## THE PASSING OF THE GAEL



ML - 2554 - 6







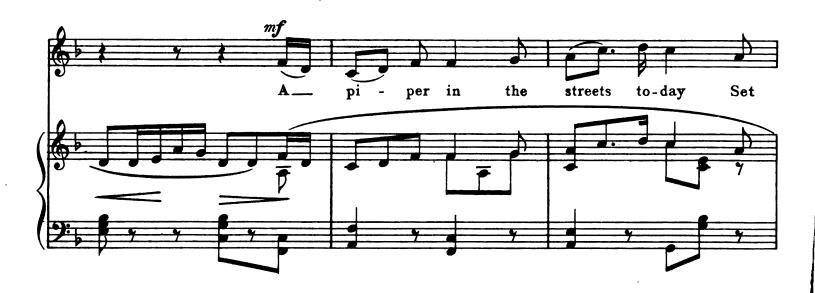




SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

Irish Air
Arranged by William Arms Fisher







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M L - 2555 - 3



ML-2555-3

## THE SEDGES







## SHULE AGRA



a) Farewell, my darling b) Come, come, my love:







# SILENT, O MOYLE, BE THE ROAR OF THY WATER

(The song of Fionnuala, the daughter of Lir)

THOMAS MOORE

Air: "Arrah, my dear Eveleen"

Arranged by William Arms Fisher









ML-2558-4





a) Darling young girl (pronounced "O gas-tore.")

b) Fair girl of my heart.





MOIRA O'NEILL

Irish Air
Arranged by William Arms Fisher







ML-2560-3

# SOONTREE (A LULLABY)





\*) Ma creevin cno, My cluster of nuts = my brown-haired girl.



# 172 A SWORD OF LIGHT HATH PIERCED THE DARK







\*) Mo chreeveen no, My cluster of nuts = my brown-haired girl, i.e., Ireland.





Irish Air



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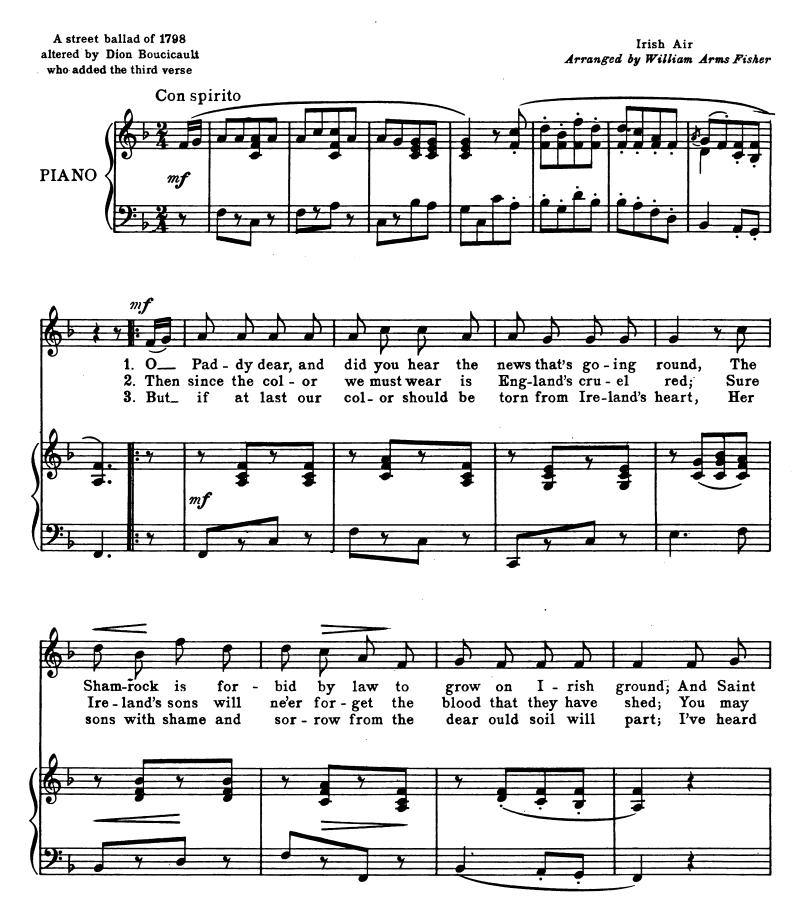
ML-2563-3







#### THE WEARING OF THE GREEN

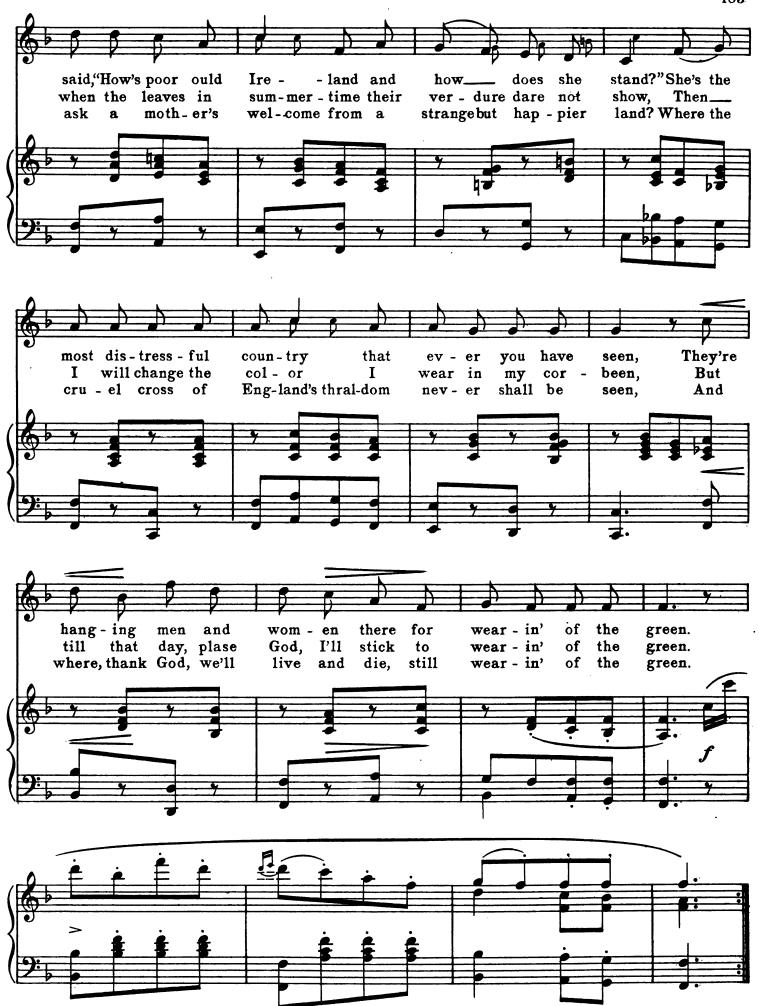


This song was sung throughout Ireland subsequently to 1798. The melody was printed in 1756.



•) Some versions give Buonaparte in place of Napper Tandy.

ML-2565-3



### WE'RE WEARIN' AV THE GREEN





ML-2566-3









# WHEN THE WEST WIND BLOWS

Irish Air JAMES B. DOLLARD Arranged by William Arms Fisher Moderato VOICE 2.'Tis the **PIANO** Ι'n yo nan, goin' tor - ture of moth - er When her treas - ured a ones are way Ne - phin the back Where the moun - tain, lost, An' she sees the bit - ter ter Where their wa



# THE WIND FROM THE WEST









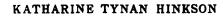








## WOULD GOD I WERE THE TENDER APPLE BLOSSOM



Irish Air from County Derry
Arranged by William Arms Fisher

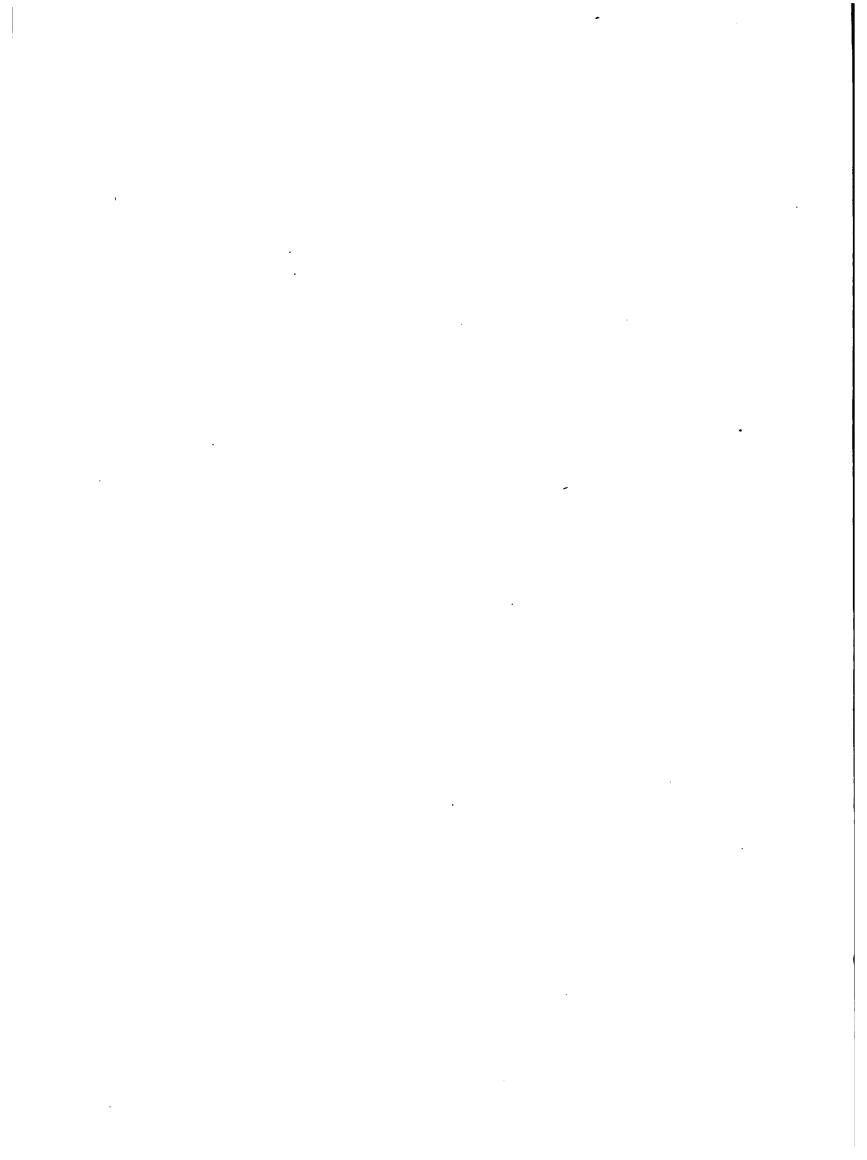




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